

Mc. Vickar (J. A.)

THE

Social Position of Medicine.

AN

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

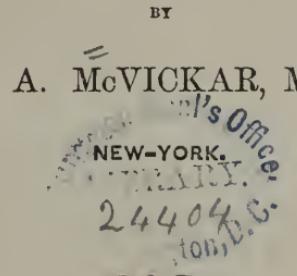
DELIVERED BEFORE THE

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BY

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A D D R E S S.

GENTLEMEN OF THE HAHNEMANN ACADEMY:

We are members of a profession, which, for moral dignity and usefulness to man, is second to none, save only that of the Christian ministry. To its care and vigilance are confided the happiness and well-being of the community in the essential department of life and health. We are physicians; to the healing art we have committed our all of fame and worldly hopes. We do well to be emulous in such a service; we may reasonably be jealous and watchful for the honor of our profession.

It is true that the history of our art presents a dark and dispiriting retrospect; but, thanks to one whose name we cherish in the title of our association, and who has left to the world an enduring legacy in the fruits of his genius and industry, the last page of that history shines with a brightness which makes visible the darkness of the past, and throws a strong and cheering light well forward into the future. As we rally under the venerated name of Hahnemann, let us emulate his spirit; and strive to provoke for his memory the gratitude of the world, by practical demonstrations of the truth and beauty of his great discovery, and by extending the range of its benefits.

The advancement of medicine, or the healing art, which the constitution of our Academy declares to be the object for which it was organized, presupposes a present state or condition to be improved, in reference to its peculiar purpose or end; and reasonably indicates, as subjects meriting our attention, everything which directly or indirectly affects its means and opportunities for fulfilling its mission—the healing of the sick. Certainly not the least in importance amongst the

agencies which would favor or resist the benevolent purposes of medicine, is the estimation in which it and the profession are held by those it aims to benefit.

Conceiving it, therefore, a matter perfectly legitimate to the sphere of our duties, and not inappropriate to the occasion, I have selected as the theme of the present address, "The Social Position of Medicine; on what that position depends, and how it can be improved."

Not longer ago than 1846, the medical profession seemed to have become suddenly and painfully conscious of a declension of their influence and position in the world, and as suddenly to have jumped to a conclusion as to the causes of their fall, and the remedy. A quotation from a respectable periodical published at that time, reputed to have been under the auspices of one of our chartered medical institutions in this city, and avowedly the organ of an association then in process of organization, will put the case fully before you. The words are these, "the science of medicine stands low enough in public opinion, and the preference so generally given to quackery and deceit over philosophy and candor, conclusively shows towards which side it now inclines." * * * "The time has come when something must be done to change the character of the profession; owing to accidental circumstances, but mainly to the rampancy of quackery, the public have but little confidence in our profession."

These sentiments seem to have been received as "ex cathedra," and adopted in mass by nearly the whole allopathic school, not only in this city, but throughout the land;—certainly they have endorsed them by their acts, and thereby made them public property for all purposes of criticism. In this view alone—as the expressed sentiments of the allopathic branch of the medical profession—I propose to analyse them; and I must be distinctly understood, before proceeding farther, that in what I have to offer on the subject no personal application or direction has been or is meditated, and none must be inferred.

We have here four distinct propositions:

1st. The science of medicine stands low in public opinion.

- 2d. The public have but little confidence in our profession.
- 3d. Accidental circumstances and quackery are the causes of the two first ; and,
- 4th. The necessity of doing something to change the character of the profession as the remedy.

Taking them up as the sentiments and views of the profession, then, I say, we cannot endorse them. On the contrary, we owe it to truth, to the public, and to our own reputation, even at the risk of being accused of a radical or heretical spirit, to scrutinize severely so grievous a charge against the public, so damning a confession from the profession, before we give it our sanction, come with what weight of authority it may.

Gentlemen, up to this moment we are responsible for the sanction of our silence. My counsel is, that we rest under that responsibility no longer. Lend your attention, if you please, to the consideration of these several propositions in detail.

First. *The science of medicine stands low in public opinion.* This we may safely pronounce monstrous, incredible, and inadmissible. The multiplied evidences of insanity and folly which pain our senses every day might justify the belief, if an individual, or even a limited community, were charged with refusing respect to science, but that the public, the great body of the human family, are so sunk down into a miserable fatuity, is harder to be believed than many things which those who think themselves wise pronounce impossible.

But let us inquire whether, by the term science, as here used, was meant the same thing as that to which I refer, and which it would be an act of treason to the intellect and reason to repudiate. Having for its subject man, the most complex, the most perfect piece of mechanism which the world has ever beheld, embodying in one slight form a contribution from every kingdom, an example of every law, a demonstration of every force in nature ; and this form so exquisitely fitted, so delicately balanced, constantly exposed to uncounted influences striving to disturb its functions, almost every natural science pays tribute to the art of medicine ; more emphatically, perhaps, anatomy, physiology, and chemistry.

But neither of these is the science of medicine. The science of anatomy is no more the science of medicine than is that of natural philosophy; nor the science of physiology or chemistry than that of hydrostatics. Each of these is a distinct science of itself, and all are but auxiliaries to the art. Besides, none of these, nor all of them, could have been contemplated for each of them stands deservedly high in public regard.

The science of medicine must, of necessity, like other sciences, be distinct and perfect in itself—a system of principles and laws which shall account for and explain the phenomena of disease and its cure—the laws of relation between diseases and their causes, and diseases and their remedies; by which the art of medicine—the application of the means of cure—must be governed. Had the allopathic school possessed this, we should know at once what was meant by the term; had they possessed it, this charge would never have been made; had they possessed it, the occasion for making it would not have existed.

But they do not pretend to it. A respectable and accredited teacher of medicine and surgery in that school, not fifteen years ago, declares, in his writings, that medicine, after its boasted two thousand years, is but “a complicated art, with scarcely any fixed principles,” and that “since the time of *Celsus* very little improvement has taken place in medicine; and if we take the weaker parts of *Celsus*, as, for example, the absurd variety which characterises some of his prescriptions, we shall not have much difficulty, at the present day, in discovering similar violations of all rules by which anything like a philosophical investigation of the effects of remedies can be conducted.”

Now, as it is evident that, in the use of the term science of medicine, reference was not had to what that branch of the profession did not claim, so it is equally certain that it did refer to something they had, and on which they rested their superior claim to respect and confidence—and that was the art of medicine based upon experience—empirical art. What advantage, then, may I ask, can they claim over the vulgar empiric or Indian doctress at the bedside of the sick? None,

save in a better education in auxiliary sciences, and a more extensive experience. They equally appeal, and appeal with equal justice, I do not say with equal force, to experience, and the plea is good. "*Experientia docet*" is a maxim which all can understand and all appreciate; while "*Medicus sum*" unfortunately has not always proved a reliable voucher. Gentlemen, we cannot upon such evidence endorse the accusation against the public, that they deprecate science.

The history of medicine exhibits this peculiarity, that, up to the present century, the art has undergone less change, while it has suffered greater vicissitudes than any other department of human learning or labor. It is a history of progress without advancement, of devious wanderings within a circle in pursuit of the shifting light of an ignus fatuus, till the number, absurdity, and inconsistency of its successive and antagonistic theories, might readily suggest to the imagination the presiding influence of some maniac demon over its destinies. And yet Nature's law of cure, like the law of gravitation, existed from the foundation of the world, directing and controlling all phenomena within its department of Nature's works; like it, undiscoverable but by pure philosophical induction—the one approved and only road; like it, pointing for the proofs of its genuineness to the past, the present, and the future. In the absence of the knowledge of Nature's laws, the imagination vainly wanders over floating fields of wonderful but disjointed facts; with it, harmonious order reigns, the mystery of what has been is resolved, what is to be can be safely anticipated. Without Hahnemann's beautiful discovery, experience derived from the observation of phenomena is the sole and very limited guide of which our art can boast. In it, we possess the key to these phenomena, and, in the language of an eminent statesman and jurist, that which gave to medicine the first shadow of claim to take her place amongst the exact sciences. Without it, medicine is but an empirical *art*, which the public may judge, and, if needs be, condemn; but *science* is above the influence and independent of the world's favor and its frowns.

The second proposition is, "*The public have but little confidence in our profession.*"

The standing of any profession would naturally rise and sink with the reputation of their art. But let us examine the medical profession itself, to learn if their own minds may not have exaggerated the actual declension of their position, or admitting it to the full, how far their own acts may have contributed to it. A man, individually or in his profession, may deceive himself as to his real importance in respect of those around him, and his pride may receive a stunning fall, by an accidental circumstance simply awakening him to the reality of his position, without the world being conscious of any sudden or special change in their estimation of him. The pride and sensitiveness of physicians as a class is, we know, proverbial; and the idea that medicine is their exclusive right and prerogative, when in fact they are only its ministers to the public, seems to have become almost a part of their very being. The world, however, does not so regard it, and rightly; but metes out to them, as to others, just the amount of credit and distinction to which their merits may entitle them. Accordingly, if they assumed a position which they were afterwards unable to maintain, they subjected themselves to the very casualty here complained of, and became almost the willing sport of accident.

The days of professional wigs and gold-headed canes—when mere external insignia secured deference—have gone by to the profession; and we are come into democratic, merit-weighing times, in which science commands a premium, but empty pretensions are at a discount. The sentiments of the age, at any rate in this country, cannot be better expressed than in the quaint but forcible language of the day—“Birth and parentage are of no account when compared with a good bringing-up,” and, “The value of a thing is what it will fetch.”

The arrogance of the medical profession, however, has a story. We are often forced to look back to infancy to solve the riddle of a life, and rarely fail to find the thread in some, perhaps trifling circumstance, which, operating just at the fitting moment, has changed the current of its destiny. The

history of medicine offers no exception to the rule. More than two thousand years ago heathen Greece, according to the best dictates of her dark mythology, deified her *Aesculapius* and installed his disciples Priests. Looked at from this remote and enlightened period, it may seem a very slight and unimportant matter, that, before medicine had dreamed of a science, her journeymen and apprentices should have been clothed with the highest honors, and invested with irresponsible power—

“Should for those arts mere instinct could afford,
Be crowned as monarchs, or as gods adored—”

but it requires no great stretch of the imagination to follow this mischievous thread, by its mischievous effects, through the whole interval of time, down to the present. For as their first acts were despotic, so have their last aimed to be tyrannical, and both have been immoral. The first were based upon ignorance and superstition; secluding medicine in mystery, and with affected sanctity commanding a servile reverence and submission; the last was founded upon an imagined or most overrated social necessity; over-estimating as usual, their own importance, and the world's dependence, they have presumed to dictate to the public insulting terms of submission, and to thunder their threats of excommunication against all who shall dare to transgress their sovereign will. No disease, however critical or obscure, however painful or dangerous, can have their aid in counsel, if the attending physician be a disciple of Hahnemann. Let his academic and legal credentials be ever so perfect, his learning and experience ever so profound, his moral character ever so pure, his professional relations to the sufferer ever so dear, whether earned by success, where others had as signally failed, or by self-denying devotion in hours of peril, if he has honestly tried, and proving has approved the law—the first law discovered in medicine which gave it a shadow of claim to rank amongst the exact sciences, their fiat is, “he must be dismissed.” Not because he is unworthy, for he was late one of themselves, and perhaps one of the first; not because he is incompetent, for he has added knowledge to knowledge;

but because true art and empirical art differ as essentially in their practice as in their claims to public confidence.

Rejecting facts unexamined because they are inconvenient to old prejudices, and answering arguments by ridicule and invective, are vulgar and senseless follies, but by no means of recent adoption by the pseudo-regular profession; so that the plea of quackery and accidental circumstances, if admitted, will not justify, nor the present exigency of their case excuse it. It has been their standing policy—their reserve force—for all similar emergencies, as the annals of medicine, the veriest record of persecutions and sufferings as the rewards for great discoveries in medicine, can testify.

It is but little more than two hundred years since the circulation of the blood was discovered and demonstrated by the immortal *Harvey*. This discovery, setting at nought the previous cherished theory of the doctors, that the arteries were occupied by the animal spirits, (because found empty after death,) brought down upon the devoted head of its discoverer, the utmost virulence of abuse and ill-treatment that malignity could invent. So, too, with *Paré*, who introduced into surgery the practice of tying arteries to arrest the flow of blood after amputations, in place of the barbarous application of the hot iron, or boiling oil and resins to the amputated stump, which before had been the only resource, and the uncertainty and cruelty of which practice had induced some surgeons to prefer the slower and safer course of strangulating the limb they wished to remove, by ligature, and allowing it to mortify and fall off. The author of this invaluable improvement in surgery, was forced to keep it hidden in his own bosom for years, by the stupidity, obstinacy, and tyranny of the faculty; and was enabled to publish it when he did, years after he had demonstrated its feasibility, only by royal partiality. A disgusting exhibition of the degree of folly and wickedness to which conceit and prejudice may drive a sect.

Such things were and are. I might recite to you from the histories of vaccination, and many other remedial blessings vouchsafed by kind heaven to mitigate human suffering,

which have been arrested in their course, and detained in their merciful career by the ignorance and selfishness of the profession. But I forbear; enough, I think, has been submitted to show, that, whereas the art of medicine is acknowledged to have changed but little since the days of Celsus, the body which calls itself "the regular profession" has changed less, whether we look at it in its philosophy or in its morality; and if the public has, as has been confessed, but little confidence in the *empirical branch* of the profession, it is certainly not without reason. Our experience, however, if I am a competent judge, will not justify our uniting in a wholesale confession which would include us all. We only demand, and society is willing to accord to us the respect and confidence which is due to an honest and earnest application of a noble art.

This brings us to the third proposition, the supposed cause of the public having but little confidence in the medical profession; to wit, "*Accidental circumstances, but mainly the rampancy of quackery.*"

The proneness of the human mind to attribute the miscarriage of its schemes, or the disappointment of its hopes to anything and everything but that which would send the blame homeward, is confined to no class, condition, or calling. A dilemma such as we are considering, is just in point, and displays this human weakness exercising its ingenuity to escape from a responsibility by seeming to fix it somewhere else, yet implicating no person nor thing.

"*Accidental circumstances,*" however, means something, indefinite as it is, and indefinite as it was intended here to be. The term conveys the idea of events which are too well known to require more than an allusion; or too numerous to repay the enumeration; or, again, so entirely casual that the sufferer was altogether irresponsible, both for the occurrences and their irresistible effects. If not referable to any of these conditions, its use must be set down as an evasion or a quibble.

I have endeavored, with all the care which a just criticism demands, to recall, if possible, something which occurred or existed about that time, to which the expression "*accidental circumstances,*" in this connection, could be applied. But,

although in reference to the occurrences of that period, as affecting medicine, I can feelingly say, in the words of the poet, "*quaque ipse miserrima vidi, et quorum pars magna fui,*" I declare to you that I can call up nothing to which the application could, reasonably, or by any stretch of charity, be made.

"*Quackery*" is another term of vague signification, but of most suicidal import, when urged as a plea by the medical profession. As well might a gardener excuse the unproductiveness of his grounds by pointing to its weeds, or the housewife reflect censure upon the vermin which breed by her neglect, as doctors raise the cry of quackery to cover their defeat. Quackery is the fruit, and strongest evidence of their art's defects. It is the counterfeit of what science should, but has failed to provide. It is the straw which drowning hope seizes upon, while it curses the necessity. Tell it not that quackery is indigenous to medicine, and found nowhere else. Where true art is, quackery cannot live. True art is based on laws; laws are the plummet and the line, the touchstone and the test by which all claims are tried, the truth endorsed, and all false tokens nailed to the counter to circulate no more.

To charge the discredit of Medicine to accidental circumstances and quackery, is a base slander upon society, besides being, as a defence, ridiculously puerile and absurd.

The fourth and last proposition is, "*The time has come when something must be done to change the character of the profession.*"

With all the knowledge had of the medical profession, of their views of the nature and degree of the evil under which they supposed themselves suffering, and of the imagined causes of that evil, I venture to affirm that it would have defied all legitimate inference, and left every conclusion at fault, in any attempt to find out the change in the character of the profession that was contemplated in this proposition, and the process by which it was to be effected and maintained, had we not witnessed the operation in its inception and progress.

Who could have imagined so improbable a thing, as that a body so proud, so dignified, so sensitive to the crowd (the *profanum vulgus*), boasting, too, the title of a liberal profession, and looking with horror upon everything which connected the idea of trade with their profession, so far forgetting their propriety as to put that profession upon a level with the lowest trades, and themselves with journeymen artisans, by organising a *Medical Trades-Union!*—a combination to force employers to their terms, and to shut out the competition of all who should decline submitting to the requirements and rules of the order.

It is useless to attempt to oppose this construction by pointing to the stereotyped avowal of that association: “The improvement of Medicine, and the elevation of the Profession.” That is but the conventional flag which every craft carries at her peak on leaving port, and is easily lowered or run up as occasion suits. Showing an honest signal is of small avail when actions witness to the contrary.

If quackery furnished the necessity, why did they not unite years before to put it down? No, no, it was not quackery, rampant nor couching, against which they would war. It was against Homœopathy, though they deemed it prudent to disguise the name. No arbitrary classification can change the nature of a thing, or make it what it is not. Placing Homœopathy by the side of quackeries in an artificial and unauthorised arrangement cannot make it quackery, when it does not possess a solitary element of what is understood or implied by that opprobrious term. It recognises no nostrum, deals in no secrecy, but displays its treasures and courts inquiry. The fact that no charge has ever been brought against the school specifying a breach of professional decorum, is conclusive evidence that quackery is not their crime.

No opprobrium was attached to the practice of Homœopathy till recently. The sect had existed in their midst for years, but the allopathic body had not as yet suffered materially by its presence, and they could afford to meet their homœopathic brethren cordially and upon equal terms, and, except an occasional harmless joke, nothing would have indicated

that any difference of sentiment existed. They did not blush even to ask counsel of them in cases of disease which had resisted empirical treatment—and I will venture to say they never asked in vain. Homœopathists were and are ready to meet them whenever the common enemy—disease—is to be opposed, or humanity demands their aid,—holding, as in duty bound, their knowledge and experience to be a sacred trust for the benefit of others. Do I misrepresent you, gentlemen? I know that I do not.

To return from this digression, the harmony which then existed might have continued unbroken, and quackery gone unrebuked indefinitely, had Homœopathy remained as it was—within the narrow limits which it had thus far occupied. But in the nature of things it could not, and already it was observed making its way, surely and rapidly, into larger and more influential circles. The assurance had been reiterated and re-echoed that its lay-adherents were only the weak and the imaginative, who are ever on the alert for something new or fanciful, and who would be ready to forswear their allegiance upon the first appearance of danger; that its doom was certain and near at hand, under the stern ordeal of reason and experience. They counted without their host. A change was working, a change which has since given more aid and comfort to the cause than any other one thing could have done, and has effectually blunted their childish weapons—ridicule and abuse. It was engaging the attention and convincing the reason of educated and strong-minded men, until now we count its advocates by hundreds from the bench, the bar, and the pulpit.

Such a breast-work, I need not say, is impregnable to all the puny weapons which malevolence can invent, or the imagination fabricate. Facts must there be combatted by facts, reason by reason; and, without a total change of armament, a combined assault in solid column, in the shape of an association, possesses but little advantage over individual or guerilla warfare.

It is, however, unnecessary to dwell upon their strategy or their tactics. We needed not to be told, what their abortive

attempts at legislation proved to their discomfiture, that no excluding act can be framed, which can legally shut us out (individually) from any medical association which rests its qualifications for membership upon professional regularity. Regularly educated, holding the regular legal diplomas, having regularly conformed to all the requirements of law and usage, and chargeable with no irregularity, save, by misconstruction, this, that we apply a law of nature in our art, if we are disfranchised, it must and can be only upon this fact. Herding us with quacks and ignorant pretenders, that they might surreptitiously exclude us, was an act of violence; and none but their own eyes were blinded to the odium which attached to the deed, and to the too apparent baseness of the motive.

Here, gentlemen, they have placed themselves, and here we may safely leave them. But in reference to that "*something*" which they predetermined "*must be done*," and which we have a right to presume, *was* done in the way contemplated in the proposition, we are bound by every consideration of social duty, to say nothing of professional dignity and propriety, to repudiate and disavow it, as utterly unworthy of a liberal profession.

The constitution of the Hahnemann Academy makes eligible to membership, "any physician residing in the city of New-York or its vicinity, having received the degree of doctor of medicine, or a diploma of license to practice according to the laws of this State." It proposes to carry out its object—"the advancement of the healing art, by mutual consultations and by public and private teaching." Comment upon these sections, by me at this time, is as unnecessary as it would be out of place. So long as our acts are not in violation of them, they speak for themselves and for us.

I am fully persuaded that the evil, under which the public and the profession are at present laboring, is simple and remediable. For, gentlemen, if the profession be suffering from the effects of medical infidelity, the public are infinitely more.

It is one thing to ridicule medicine, and mock at doctors'

quarrels and differences of creed, in times of health and fancied security, but quite a different thing, when the body is racked with pain or the subject of inexorable disease, or, worse, when the heart's treasure perchance lies struggling within the jaws of death. Have you been so unfortunate as personally to witness such a case? Have you watched the undisguised anguish of the husband, or father, at the bedside of his darling, looking from one faith to the other, with confused mind and distracted heart, unable to decide his doubts, and yet unwilling to resign the chance? The experience of one in such a condition I will give you in her own strong simile; I am, said she, "like a heathen awakened to a full sense of his danger, but not yet convinced of the saving truths of revelation."

Gentlemen, this state of things—this condition of the public mind—is an immense social evil. It is not a subject for reproach, nor captious animadversion, and anything like complaint or upbraiding comes with a peculiarly bad grace from our profession. It is entitled to our sympathy, and best efforts for its correction; and we may rest assured that those efforts will not pass unnoticed nor unrewarded.

We have seen that the great cause of the want of confidence on the part of the public toward physicians, has been the imperfection of empirical art. The evil is wide-spread, and we, in common with our brethren suffer by it. Though, in Homœopathy, medicine has become a true art, and therefore the cause has ceased to exist, its influence remains, and time will be required to recover for legitimate medicine its rightful position. But much may be done to hasten the event, by a very simple and I think reasonable and proper means—and that is, *popular instruction in medicine*.

There is no good reason why medicine should be entirely excluded from the catalogue of popular studies. Popular lectures on mechanics do not set every man to mending his own watch when it needs repairs; on the contrary the knowledge imparted to him makes him the more careful to avoid tampering with its delicate arrangements, or submitting it to incompetent hands. The preservation of health and the safe

treatment of disease are certainly matters of infinitely greater delicacy and importance ; the first being of necessity committed to the discretion of each individual, and the proper selection of a medical adviser left to his judgment ; yet how incompetent from lack of knowledge, are a considerable portion of the laity to exercise either in the premises.

Medicine is no mystery, and we can no longer make it appear a mystery if we would ; but to many it is practically a nullity. In sickness, it would seem, they must (from habit or example) do something in the way of treatment, but *what*, they think of little importance. Their idea of means toward a cure is that it is a chance, and they blindly take of anything that offers. How frequently does it occur that, to the physician's question, "what have you taken for your disease?" the answer is returned, "*something* (pill or mixture, as the case may be) *we had in the house*," in entire ignorance of its composition, whether applicable or injurious.

With an appropriate kind and degree of knowledge, think you a man would trust the repairs of his delicate organism to his own unskilful hand or to that of an ignorant pretender, when he would not commit his watch to the rude manipulations of a blacksmith ?

Quackery, which owed its origin to a defective art, owes its protracted existence to popular ignorance in medicine. The age in which we live demands that we should forsake the ancient policies of our craft, and conform to the spirit of the times. The nineteenth century is a great practical fact, which cannot be kept too constantly before the mind in all the concerns of life, but it has a special bearing upon the prospective course of our profession, and particularly of our own institution. As individuals, we are meeting and correcting, day by day, the prevailing medical scepticism ; as an institution we owe it to society to act upon the masses.

This evil spirit grows out of that degree of knowledge which enables its possessor to discover faults and apparent inconsistencies in medical practice, but not to weigh and appreciate its difficulties and its merits ; while a greater degree would convince them that a regular and systematic education is

necessary even to a safe application of remedies to a known disease; whereas, without such education, and much experience and practical acumen, many diseases are undiscoverable, and all are liable to be mistaken and consequently maltreated.

The advanced state of general education has made the public mind familiar with many things which a very few years ago were abstruse, and sealed to all but the few; accordingly it is not only prepared to grapple with anything which is interesting, or can be made practically useful, but it is entirely unprepared to yield a blind submission of the reason to any. If in medicine we desire its confidence, that is attainable, but only by convincing its judgment. If we wish the public to respect the true physician, we must give them such knowledge as will enable them to appreciate him in the intellectual and artistic features of his profession.

Give them the means of thinking for themselves. Let them see that the art of medicine relies upon no faculty of second-sight, intuitive or acquired, by which the qualities of disease can be discerned at a glance; that it does not sanction a careless application of means scarce shrewdly guessed at; but that the unravelling of disease and its reasonable treatment are processes which demand the exercise of the highest qualities of mind. In other words, we must teach them what the art of medicine is, and what it requires, and we may then safely leave it and the profession to find their own level, confident that our art, founded as it now is on true principles, will yield to none in dignity, and that its practitioners will receive that place in public estimation to which their noble and self-denying labors so well entitle them.